Elections in Africa

A Data Handbook

Edited by

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Acknowledgements

This handbook is part of a continuous scientific work on elections, electoral systems and political development in different world regions realized at the Institute of Political Science of the University of Heidelberg since the 1960s, when Dolf Sternberger and Bernhard Vogel initiated a voluminous research project on 'The Election of Parliaments and other State Organs'. The first result of this project was the publication of *Die Wahl der Parlamente* (1969), a two-volume book containing documentation and analyses of the electoral development of all European countries. In 1978 a second, two-volume book was published on Africa under the subtitle *Politische Organisation und Repräsentation in Afrika*, principally authored by Franz Nuscheler and Klaus Ziemer. In the same year Dieter Nohlen published his *Wahlsysteme der Welt*, a systematic handbook on electoral systems of the world. In the late 1980s a multinational research group directed by Dieter Nohlen began a new stage of the larger project (though under a different label), now working on parliamentary and presidential elections in Latin America and the Caribbean. The result was published in 1993 in German (*Handbuch der Wahldaten Lateinamerikas und der Karibik*) and in Spanish (*Enciclopedia Electoral Latinoamericana y del Caribe*). Building on the experience of this data handbook which had received a strong impulse from the numerous democratization processes in Latin America, and under the impetus of political regime changes in Africa, we began in 1994 to conceptualize another project with the aim of compiling an as complete as possible systematic documentation of electoral data of African countries since independence. Further steps will include an updated and reworked edition of the handbook on Latin America and, finally, a similar volume on Asia, which both will be published by Oxford University Press. For the realization of this plan the help of many people and organizations has been, and still remains, indispensable.

For invaluable financial support in the preparation of this handbook we are indebted to the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG). Earlier related projects were also supported by the Volkswagen Foundation, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Interamerican Institute for Human Rights (San José, Costa Rica). On behalf of the DFG, Helga Hoppe has administered the project in the most confident and competent

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To participate as an author in projects like this one is neither easy nor fun. There is little room to give one's contribution an individual profile. Instead there are many inconvenient guidelines to be followed and many time consuming questions and comments of the editors to be dealt with before one has completed a chapter that from a distant point of view does not count very much in one's bibliographical record. We are therefore more than grateful to our authors for their constant readiness to cooperate and for their patience in awaiting the final publication of their contributions. Helga Fleischhacker and Christof Hartmann have not only participated as authors but have also provided important assistance in the process of data collection and standardization of the information presented in this handbook.

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The editors

Heidelberg, December 1998

Contents

Notes on Editors and Contributors vii
Technical Notes xv

Elections and Electoral Systems in Africa
(Dieter Nohlen, Michael Krennerich and Bernhard Thibaut) 1

Algeria (Dirk Axtmann) 41
Angola (Ana Catarina Clemente-Kersten) 65
Benin (Christof Hartmann) 79
Botswana (Goswin Baumhögger) 103
Burkina Faso (Florian Grotz) 123
Burundi (Matthias Basedau) 153
Cameroon (Andreas Mehler) 167
Cape Verde (Ana Catarina Clemente-Kersten) 189
Central African Republic (Andreas Mehler) 205
Chad (Manuela Römer) 221
Comoros (Bernhard Thibaut) 243
Congo (Brazzaville) (Helga Fleischhacker) 259
Congo (DR) (Siegmar Schmidt and Daniel Stroux) 281
Côte d'Ivoire (Christof Hartmann) 301
Djibouti (Bernhard Thibaut) 315
Egypt (Matthias Ries) 329
Equatorial Guinea (Helga Fleischhacker) 351
Eritrea (Bernhard Thibaut) 367
Ethiopia (Michael Meier) 373
Gabon (Helga Fleischhacker) 387
Gambia (Petra Bendel) 411
Ghana (Michael Krennerich) 423
Guinea (Stefan Brüne) 447
Guinea-Bissau (Ana Catarina Clemente-Kersten) 461
Kenya (Dirk Hartmann) 475
Lesotho (Ulf Engel) 495
Liberia (Matthias Basedau) 507
Libya (Hanspeter Mattes) 523
Madagascar (Bernhard Thibaut) 531

Malawi (Heiko Meinhardt) 549
Mali (Shaheen Mozaffar) 567
Mauritania (Regina Wegemund) 585
Mauritius (Michael Krennerich) 603
Morocco (Juan Montabes Pereira and María A. Parejo Fernández) 623
Mozambique (Michael Krennerich) 645
Namibia (Michael Krennerich) 659
Niger (Matthias Basedau) 677
Nigeria (Petra Bendel) 697
Rwanda (Tilo Stolz) 727
Sao Tomé and Príncipe (Helga Fleischhacker) 739
Senegal (Petra Bendel) 755
Seychelles (Bernhard Thibaut) 775
Sierra Leone (Andrew Reynolds) 789
Somalia (Michael Krennerich) 803
South Africa (Ulf Engel) 817
Sudan (Curtis F. Doebbler and Helga Fleischhacker) 843
Swaziland (Matthias Basedau) 863
Tanzania (Wolfgang Fengler) 871
Togo (Daniel Stroux) 891
Tunisia (Juan Montabes Pereira) 911
Uganda (Siegmar Schmidt) 925
Zambia (Michael Krennerich) 939
Zimbabwe (Goswin Baumhögger) 963

Glossary 981

Notes on Editors and Contributors

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